

Through the Bible - Genesis 19-20

by Chuck Smith

The sermon emphasizes the importance of God's fairness and justice in judgment, and the need for parents to set a strong spiritual example for their children to withstand the pressures of the world.

Scripture: Genesis 19:1

Topics: "God's Justice", "Moral Integrity"

Description

Chuck Smith discusses the destruction of Sodom and the importance of God's justice in judgment, emphasizing Abraham's intercession for the city and God's fairness in not punishing the righteous alongside the wicked. He highlights the moral decline of Lot, who, despite being called righteous, was influenced by the corruption of Sodom, ultimately losing his family to its evils. The sermon also draws parallels between Lot's deliverance and the church's future deliverance from impending judgment, underscoring the need for believers to remain steadfast in their faith amidst societal pressures. Smith warns against the dangers of compromising one's morals and the consequences of living in a corrupt society, while also reflecting on Abraham's imperfect faith and God's grace. The message concludes with a reminder of the importance of setting a strong spiritual example for future generations.

Transcript

Chapter nineteen of the book of Genesis deals with the destruction of the city of Sodom. The Lord came to Abraham and informed him of the fact that because of the wickedness of Sodom, it was necessary for the judgment of God to come. Abraham pleaded with the Lord for Sodom, interceded actually saying, "But what if there are fifty righteous; would You destroy the righteous with the wicked?" And the basis of Abraham's intercession was the Lord of the earth should be fair, or be just. Even in judgment, God must be fair or just. God cannot be unjust in any action at any time ever.

Now this is an area that Satan is constantly seeking to make a case against God. How can a God of love--or would a God of love condemn a man to eternal hell who has never heard of Jesus Christ? What about that person who lives over in Africa, who lived and died never knowing of Jesus Christ? Is he going to have to suffer forever in hell because he lives in Africa, and never had a chance to hear? It is interesting the Bible doesn't give us the answer directly, but the Bible does give us an indirect answer and that is that God is totally fair.

When God judges, it will be absolutely just. And Abraham's argument with God was, "Shall not the Lord of the earth be fair, or be just?" When God spoke of the judgment that was going to come, now Abraham saw

an inequity if God would judge the righteous with the wicked. That wouldn't be fair. That's the premise and the basis of Abraham's argument with the Lord, that it wouldn't be fair to judge the righteous with the wicked.

Now Jesus said to His disciples, "In this world you're going to have tribulation: but [He said] be of good cheer; I've overcome the world" (John 16:33). The church has had tribulation. The church today is under great persecution. In Romania, they're tightening again their Communistic hold and they are again beginning to really persecute the church in Romania. Many of the pastors have been imprisoned in the past few weeks.

Christians have been persecuted in China, in Russia, and in those Communist dominated countries, as well as the Moslem dominated countries. Communism is not the only foe of Christianity; Moslem Islamism is perhaps the greatest foe of Christianity. In the Islam countries, it is a capital crime to seek to convert an Islamic person to Christianity. You'd be put to death for that, causing him to change his religious beliefs. And so the church has always experienced persecution from the world.

The Bible says don't count it strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing has happened unto you. In fact, if the world loves you then you better examine your position. "But if the world hates you," don't be alarmed, "Jesus said, It hated me. The servant is not greater than his lord" (John 15:18,20). So the persecution that the church experiences though has as its source or origin the world and the worldly system.

The Great Tribulation that is coming or the judgment of God, whenever that comes, then the church is not a victim because God will be fair in His judgment. "And if there be fifty righteous", the Lord said, "Sure I'll spare it for fifty righteous". Abraham finally talked Him down to ten. And God said He would spare it for ten righteous.

And the angels of the Lord came unto the city of Sodom. We'll get into that as we get into the nineteenth chapter. But they could not find even ten righteous. Lot, that righteous man, the only truly righteous person they could find in the city was Lot himself and not even his family was thoroughly righteous. But being merciful, God let his family out with him.

Now twice in the New Testament, once by Jesus and once by Peter, is this used as an example of the last days. Jesus said, "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man" (Luke 17:28,30), and how that the judgment did not come until the day that Lot was taken out of the city and then God rained upon the city fire and brimstone. Jesus uses that but points out the fact that Lot was delivered before the judgment came.

And Peter also points out to the deliverance of Lot showing how that "God knows how to deliver the righteous, but to reserve the ungodly for the Day of Judgment" (2 Peter 2:9). Delivering that righteous man Lot who was vexed by the manner of life of those around him. So taking the same argument of Abraham, "Shall not the Lord of the earth be just?" Would it be just that God would bring His great wrath and judgment upon the church, along with the unbelieving world? No.

And even as God delivered Lot, God shall deliver His church before the great period of judgment and the wrath of God comes upon the earth. It's just a matter of God's principle in judgment.

So in the nineteenth chapter,

And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot was bidding them to come into his home; as he bowed himself in the oriental custom towards the ground (Gen 19:1);

Now hospitality was something that was extremely important in that eastern culture. And here Lot sitting in the gate of the city, it is interesting that in that culture also the women did most of the work. The women would go out and plow the fields. The women would go out and plant the fields. The women would go out and harvest the fields while the men attended to the more important things of sitting in the gate of the city and talking about the weather, whether or not it's going to rain tomorrow, you know.

Also, sitting in the gate of the city was a place of prominence. All of the judgments were done in the gates of the city. If there were conflicts between people, problems, they would come to the elders, the elder men, who would sit in the gate of the city and the elder men would give judgments concerning the conflicts that had arisen. And thus, it was a place of honor and distinction to sit in the gate of the city. And so Lot sitting in the gate of the city saw these two men as they were coming at evening. Bowing down to them in the oriental custom.

He invited them to turn into the servant's house, and tarry all night, to wash your feet, rise up early, and you can go on your way. And they said, No, we will abide in the street tonight (Gen 19:2).

But Lot knowing the conditions of the city and knowing that danger of such a thing,

Pressed upon them [or constrained them] greatly; and so they turned in unto him, and entered into his house; and he made them a feast, and did bake unleavened bread, and they did eat. But before they were able to lie down, the men of the city, even the men of Sodom, surrounded the house, both old and young, and all of the people from every quarter: And they called unto Lot, and they said unto him, Where are the men which came in to thee tonight? bring them out to us, that we may know them (Gen 19:3-5).

And this is to know them in an intimate sexual way.

And Lot went out at the door unto them, and shut the door after him, And he said, I pray you, brethren, do not so wickedly. Behold now, I have two daughters which have not known man; let me, I pray you, bring them out unto you, and do ye to them as is good in your eyes: only unto these men do nothing; for therefore came they under the shadow of my roof (Gen 19:6-8).

Now this, of course, first of all shows what low esteem the woman was held in, in that particular culture. Lot was willing to sacrifice his own two daughters unto this mob, their virginity and all. He was willing to turn his own two daughters over to the mob that they might do what they would to his two daughters, and yet seeking to protect the two men who are strangers to him. But yet if you would take a visitor in your home, then you took the responsibility for them to really take care of them completely. But women were held in extremely low esteem in that day, in that culture and in many of the primitive cultures.

Women, be thankful for Jesus Christ and for Christianity because Jesus is the One who brought really the elevation of womanhood and the honor to the women. And that equalizing of the honor and blessing and all, and it's really through Christianity that women have been able to rise and to take their proper place, not as a subservient or not any way subservient to men but on an equal basis with men. But you won't find that in any culture outside of where the Christian gospel has gone. And where the Christian culture has gone, there always has the state of the woman been elevated. Where there is not a strong Christian gospel, the state of the woman is always that of a subservient state. And if you study your history, you'll

find that this is so.

In Greece, in the Greek culture, which was supposed to be such a cultured nation, the women had a very low place, especially the wife. She was considered just one step above the slave. So it is the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has declared there is no difference, male nor female, bond or free, but has given us all an equal status in Christ. "For Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11), and in and through Him the equal status has been established.

But here Lot, and again I believe that secondly, it shows that even Lot himself in his own morals, in his own values, had been corrupted by his living in Sodom. I do not see how you can live in the midst of such corruption and it not have some influence upon you.

Living as we do in this day and age in which we live, we are under constant bombardment and constant pressure to accept evil, to tolerate evil, and to accept perversion as natural. And if you dare say something against the homosexuals, you have a parade going on out in front. They'll file suits and everything else. And it's got to the place where people become sort of cowered into a position of just not stating your beliefs.

If you would dare say in a university class what Jesus is the only way to salvation, they make fun of you. They put you down. They call you narrow, bigoted and everything else. If you make any affirmation of faith and a belief in living a moral, pure, righteous life, then you're accused of being, you know, a Victorian and living in the past, and all of this, because of the tremendous pressures. And so it's hard to live in the midst of a society that is so corrupt without it rubbing off a little on us. At least we don't speak out on the issues in which we should be speaking out because we feel sort of threatened.

Now Lot's own morals had been corrupted to the extent that he was willing to give his daughters over to be abused by these men. The gesture was not a fine gesture of Lot. It was a gesture that showed his own moral depravity as the result of living in Sodom. Lot made the choice of moving into the plains. He pitched his tent toward Sodom. That was the beginning of it. But now he has his house in Sodom.

There is a danger in pitching your tent towards the world. It is interesting, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). There's a progression there. First of all, you're listening to the counsel of the ungodly. Next of all, you're standing around with them and the next thing you find yourself sitting in their company. Lot moved toward Sodom. Next he was living in Sodom. But it had its effect upon his own life and upon his own moral values, the offering of his daughters to this crowd of men.

But they weren't interested in his daughters. They were desiring these men that had come to Lot. And so Lot said, "Don't do this wickedness, to these men. They came unto the shadow of my roof. They're under my protection".

And they said, Stand back. And then they began to say, This fellow came in to live with us as a stranger, and now he's going to try to judge over us: they said we'll deal worse with you, than with them. And they pressed sore upon Lot, and they came near to break the door. But the men [that is, the angels] put forth their hand, and pulled Lot into the house, and they shut the door. And they smote the men that were outside the door with blindness, all of them: so that they wearied themselves to find the door. And the men said unto Lot [that is, the angels], Have you have any here besides? Do you have sons, or daughters, whatsoever you have in the city, bring them out of this place: For we will destroy this place, because the

cry of them is waxed great before the face of the LORD; and the LORD hath sent us to destroy it. And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which had married his daughters, and said, Up, get out of this place; for the LORD will destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law (Gen 19:9-14).

Now though Lot did not escape the pollutions of Sodom entirely, and the Bible gives testimony of him in Peter, "that righteous man" referring to Lot, and it speaks about how he was vexed by the way people were living around him, though he was strong enough because of his early background and experiences with his uncle Abraham to survive in this corrupt society, yet his living in the midst of the corrupt society cost him his family and the morals of his children.

Now there are some times I hear people say, "Well, I have my own philosophy that I live by. I don't need Christianity; it's just a crutch". I remember sitting one night with a man who was a plumber and he was just one of these hard, hard guys and "I don't need any crutches", you know, and

"Christianity is just a crutch and I don't need it". Going on and on, you know, how he was a self-made man. He had his own philosophy and he could get by and all of this. Of course he was drinking the whole while he was talking to me. But I watched the three sons of that man, that particular man, as they all got into drugs. And I saw his sons totally destroyed by drugs. So where he might have been able to maintain in a society with his booze, his sons weren't able to maintain. And they all really just destroyed themselves with drugs.

Many times a man will say, "But I am able to do it. I'm able to stand. I'm strong" and all this. But really, unless you set a strong example, a spiritual example in your home, your children cannot withstand the pressures of the society in the day and the age in which we live, and you're really sacrificing your children to this corrupt world. You may have a philosophy. You may have that by which you can stand. But your children are facing ungodly pressures and they need more than just a philosophy. They need the power of the Holy Spirit within their lives. And thus, you, for their sakes need to get right with God and set a strong spiritual example because they'll never survive.

Lot was able to, but his children weren't. And so as he went to his daughters and said, "Get out of here. This place is going to get destroyed. God's going to destroy this city", they just mocked him, and he was as one who mocked them. And thus, he lost his family to the corrupted morals of Sodom.

And when the morning arose, the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take your wife, and your two daughters, which are here; lest you be consumed in the iniquity of the city (Gen 19:15).

And so they were hurrying them. Said, "Get out of here now".

And while he lingered (Gen 19:16),

There was a reluctance to leave the place. Even with Lot, he was reluctant to leave. Just sort of lingering around.

the angels took hold of their hands, and upon the hand of his wife, and the two daughters; and the LORD being merciful unto him: they brought him forth, and set him outside the city. And it came to pass, when they have brought them forth, that he said, Escape for your life; don't look behind you, neither stay at all in the plain; escape to the mountains, lest you be consumed (Gen 19:16-17).

The word "don't look behind" can be translated "don't lag behind" or "do not turn back," "don't stay in the plain."

And Lot said unto them, Oh, not so, my Lord (Gen 19:18):

Perfect example of those who pray, "Not Thy will, mine be done". How inconsistent we are even in our language. "Not so, my Lord". Wait a minute. Lord is a title. And even he says thy servant. He calls himself a servant, Lord. And now he's arguing with the Master. You don't argue with your master. If He's your Lord, you do what He says. If you're doing what he said, He is your Lord. If you're not doing what He said, He's not your Lord. And I don't care how much you say, "O Lordy, Lordy" or "my Lord" or whatever. If you're not doing what He said to do, He's not really your Lord. Jesus said, "Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and yet you don't do the things I command you" (Luke 6:46)?

And so here is Lot in this perfect inconsistency. As they say "flee to the mountains, don't stay in the plains". He says, "Oh, not so, my Lord".

Behold now, thy servant hath found grace in thy sight, and thou hast magnified thy mercy, which thou hast shewed unto me saving my life; and I cannot escape to the mountain, lest some evil take me, and I die (Gen 19:19):

Now he realized the Lord had delivered him out of the city before it's to be destroyed, but he can't trust the Lord to preserve him there in the mountains, and so

Let me go to this little city over Zoar (Gen 19:20).

It's the smallest of the five cities there in the plain; it's just a little city. In fact, the word "Zoar" means little. "Let me go and stay in Zoar". And so the angels granted his request that he might flee to the little city that was nearby, the city of Zoar.

And the angel said, I have accepted you concerning this thing, I will not overthrow this city, of which you have spoken. So hurry, escape there; for I cannot do any thing till you have come within that city (Gen 19:21-22).

There was the impending judgment but yet it was to be withheld until Lot was safely out of danger. Even as there is an impending judgment of God hanging over the earth today, but it cannot come until the church has been safely placed out of danger. Hurry.

And therefore the name of the place was called Zoar (Gen 19:22).

Which means small.

And the sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar. And then the LORD rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven; and he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground (Gen 19:23-25).

Now this destruction could have been by volcanic action. Very possible because there is evidence of volcanic eruptions in that area, a lot of evidence of that. There, of course, are tremendous salt deposits in that area. I mentioned this morning there is a--on the southern end of the west of the Dead Sea there on the western side, there is a mountain of salt that is five hundred feet; no, beg your pardon, it's seven hundred feet high and five miles long. A mountain of salt; it isn't sodium chloride, your table salt. It's more

of the potassium nitrate, sodium nitrate, vast deposits of salt. Mountains of salt in that area that cannot be explained by slow sedimentation. But have to be explained by deposits through eruptions of some kind; a great overthrowing.

Now potassium nitrate is a particular salt if mixed with potassium permanganate. All you need is just a little glycerin poured upon it and you've got fire and brimstone. You got a Fourth of July display. You've got fire shooting and spouting and all it needs is just a little glycerin upon it to really set the whole thing off. The heavy water will respond upon the potassium permanganate and the potassium nitrates will keep the thing really going and sputtering and sparking. And it's like a flare, it sputters and all. But all of the potassium nitrate in the area, potassium permanganate in the area, and of course, the area did have great asphalt deposits.

Josephus calls the area rather than the Dead Sea, he called it the Asphalt Sea because of the tremendous asphalt deposits. So all it needed was just a spark from heaven to set things off. And so the whole valley turned into a furnace, a cauldron, and the judgment of God came upon these cities and they were destroyed.

But his wife looked back from behind him (Gen 19:26),

Now notice, she was behind him. She was still lagging back. The word "look back" can be translated "lag back" or "turn back." And the "turn back" is the preferable translation. Lot's wife actually began to turn back towards Sodom and in turning back, she was caught in this great conflagration and the bubbling, boiling spewing salts covered her.

and she became a pillar of salt (Gen 19:26).

Now there are many pillars of salt in that particular area that in different times have received the name Lot's wife. And there are some even today that the guide will point out as Lot's wife. Pillars of salt there in the southern end of the Dead Sea region.

Now the southernmost part of the Dead Sea, the southern ten miles is only about ten to twenty feet deep. In fact, it's less than that. Now it's extremely shallow, and many Bible scholars believe that the city of Sodom actually lies under the southern end of the Dead Sea. The northern end of the Dead Sea is thirty miles long and ten miles wide and has a depth of up to fourteen hundred feet.

But as the result of the silt that has settled through the Jordan entering into the Dead Sea for so many years, the silt has filled up the bottom and has thus raised the level of the sea until the sea extended southward over this plain area of ten miles square covering it. And that is more recent in time. So that they believe that the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah probably lie under the southern end of the Dead Sea.

We know of the silting process that is taking place where the Colorado enters into the area of Lake Mead. In fact, we are now quite concerned about this silting up of Lake Mead, how that the volume of water that it contains is less because of all of the silt that is building up, and the silt is actually forming a dam of its own in the upper end of Lake Mead. Already it is creating quite a problem in the Aswan Dam which, is a relatively new dam, and thus, the silting process. Of course the Jordan is a very muddy river and the silting process of the Jordan, filling up the Dead Sea and causing it to overflow in the southern end covering the plains and thus covering perhaps the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

However, in the last ten years they have discovered five cities on the eastern bank of the Dead Sea in the southern end. And they now believe that maybe these were the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and Zoar there on the eastern side. But we, of course, are not certain on that. It doesn't really make that much difference to the scriptural record, except that there is evidence of volcanic action. There is evidence of this great destruction of God as He rained fire and brimstone and salt upon this area.

And Abraham gat up early in the morning from the place where he stood before the LORD in his intercession: he looked toward Sodom and Gomorrah, and toward all the land of the plain, and he beheld, and, lo, the smoke of the country went up as the smoke of a furnace (Gen 19:27-28).

Now Abraham was living in Hebron, which is just about due west from the Dead Sea. And so in looking down it isn't that many miles, maybe ten, fifteen miles from Hebron. As the crow flies to the Dead Sea, he saw the smoke coming up from the area of the plain like a great furnace.

And it came to pass, when God destroyed the cities of the plain, that God remembered Abraham by sending Lot out of the midst of the overthrow, when he overthrew the cities in which Lot dwelt (Gen 19:29).

So the indication here is that it was because of Abraham that God spared Lot more than for Lot's sake himself.

Now again, turning to the New Testament Jesus takes this incident and declares of His second coming, "As it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be at the coming of the Son of man" (Luke 17:28,30), when God overthrew the cities of the plain. And then Jesus said "Remember Lot's wife. For he who will seek to save his life shall lose it" (Luke 17:32,33). Now she was seeking to hold on to the old life of the world. She was turning back to the old life of the world, seeking to save it she lost her life.

And so the warning of Jesus, "Remember Lot's wife." turning back to the world, seeking to save the old life of the world will only destroy you. "But he who will lose his life", Jesus said, "the same will save it. Lose his life for my sake". And so the reference of Jesus. Peter again refers to this and it is also referred to in the book of Jude, how that God destroyed the city of Sodom and Gomorrah, them suffering the vengeance of everlasting fire.

So Lot went up out of Zoar (Gen 19:30),

He asked permission to stay in Zoar but when he saw this judgment of God destroying the other cities, he became frightened and he left Zoar.

and he went (Gen 19:30)

Where the Lord told him to go in the first place.

up into the mountains (Gen 19:30).

He fled on up then into the mountains.

and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, with his two daughters (Gen 19:30).

Now we see the moral corruption of the two daughters that were saved.

The firstborn said to the younger, Our father is old, and there is no more men left upon the earth (Gen 19:31)

They thought that the whole earth was destroyed and thus man is going to be civilization, man is going to be wiped out. So,

Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve the seed of our father. And so they made their father drunk that night: and the firstborn went in, and lay with her father; he did not know when she lay down, nor when she arose. And it came to pass on the next day, that the firstborn said to the younger, I was with my father last night: let's make him drink wine again tonight; that you might lie with him, that we may preserve life, the life of our father, the seed of our father. And so they made their father drink wine that night also: and the younger arose, and lay with him; and he perceived not when she lay down, nor when she arose. And thus were both of the daughters pregnant from their father Lot. The firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: and he became the head of the nation of Moab or of the people known as the Moabites. And the other daughter bare a son, and called him Benammi: and the same is the father of the children of Ammon (Gen 19:32-38).

And so two nations, the Ammonites and the Moabites came from Lot and this relationship with his two daughters, of which he was unaware. But again, it shows the moral corruption had its effect upon Lot's family and we see its effects all the way through, the effect of a polluted society. It's awfully hard to live in it and not be touched somewhere or another.

Now we leave Lot, that's the end of him. We see that he has--he does father a couple of nations, Moab and Ammon. It is interesting that Moab inhabited this same area, the high country that he has east of the Dead Sea that was the area of the Moabites. The Ammonites moved northward and were in the same range of mountains, only north of the Moabites. They became important nations and Ruth was a Moabite who--or she was a girl from Moab who came into the lineage of Jesus Christ later on. So they are the descendants of Lot through his two daughters.

Chapter 20

Abraham journeyed from there toward the south country, and dwelled between Kadesh and Shur, and he sojourned in Gerar (Gen 20:1).

So Abraham was living in the area of Hebron, but now he is still sort of a nomadic person. If you go over to Israel today, you'll see the Bedouins living in their tents and they are nomadic people. They'll live for awhile in an area and then they'll get up, pack their tents and move and live in another area. And Abraham was living in tents. He never had a house to dwell in, dwelt in tents as a Bedouin, as a stranger, as a sojourner.

It is interesting that Lot sought to settle down in a city, whereas Abraham always realized that he was just a sojourner, "he was looking for a city which hath foundation, whose maker and builder was God" (Hebrews 11:10). And he counted himself just a stranger and a pilgrim upon the earth. So Abraham now is moving over into the country of the Philistines. Gerar is the area of the Philistines.

And so Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech the king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah into his harem (Gen 20:2).

Now this is a second time this has happened. Abraham did it when they went to Egypt years earlier, and he was rebuked by the Egyptian Pharaoh for doing such a thing. Now again he's doing the same thing and this certainly says something about Sarah because she's about ninety years old at this point and still retaining her beauty. So if we could only discover the kind of creams and all that she could use, that she used, we can probably make a fortune. She is still so beautiful that Abraham is afraid that they're going to kill him in order that they might take his wife.

And so he says now you just say you're my sister so that they won't kill me. And so Abimelech saw her and took her into his harem and Abimelech had not come near her.

But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said unto him, You're a dead man (Gen 20:3),

Or "you're dead", man. It's all how you put the punctuation. And in reality, if you notice that's exactly what God said. That "art but" is inserted. You notice it's in italics, it means that the translators inserted that because they didn't know the way we talk today. And God said, "Hey, you're dead, man", and so Abimelech, he said,

because of the woman which you have taken; she's another man's wife. But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, will you also slay a righteous nation? Said he not unto me, She's my sister? and even she herself said, He is my brother: it was in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands I have done this (Gen 20:3-5).

God evidently smote him with some kind of a deadly plague and says, "Hey, you've had it, man. You're dead man because you've got a woman there who is another man's wife". And so he said, "Hey, Lord, I'm innocent. Hey, I didn't know it. She'd said she was the sister and that's what he said about her and I'm innocent, Lord. I didn't really know". And God said, "Yes, I know that you did it in the integrity of your heart for I also have withheld you from sinning against me. Therefore I did not allow you to touch her". So God's hand working in the background, God not allowing him to touch Sarah.

Now therefore [God said] restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he will pray for you, and you will live: and if you don't restore her, know that you will surely die, and all that are yours. And therefore Abimelech rose early in the morning, and he called all of his servants, and he told these things in their ears: and the men were very frightened. Then Abimelech called Abraham, and said unto him, What have you done to us? and what have I done to you, that you've brought upon me and my kingdom this great sin? And thou hast done deeds unto me that ought not to be done. And Abimelech said unto Abraham, What sawest thou, that you've done this thing (Gen 20:7-10)?

In other words, what did I do to you that you do this to me? Why did you do this to us? And he's challenging the man of God.

Abraham is known as the father of those who believe. He is used throughout the Scripture as the classic example of men who believed God and the word of God. And whenever the Bible wants to use a classic example of faith, it always points to Abraham, because "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness" (James 2:23).

But you know, I like the honesty of the Bible. The Bible doesn't pretend at all that Abraham's faith was perfect. It tells us even of these lapses of faith. It is not faith for Abraham to say, "Hey, she's my sister". That's not really having faith in God; that's a lapse of faith. And somehow I get comfort from it because if

Abraham's faith were totally perfect, then I think "Oh, there's no chance for me". You know if the guy was in everything just absolutely perfect, you say, sure look how God blessed him, and no wonder God blessed him the guy's perfect. God blesses perfect people.

But Abraham was not at all perfect, though he is used as a classic example of those who believe in God. What does it mean? It means that God will honor my little faith, too. And God will bless me though I am imperfect also. It doesn't mean that my faith has to be perfect and constant and steadfast at all times, never wavering, never doubting, never fearing, never questioning. It means that God can bless me and God will bless me just because of my simple trust in Him as faltering or as failing as it might be at times in certain circumstances.

There are a lot of tests that I fail. God has put me to a lot of tests where I failed miserably. I went out of classroom with an "F", but He let me take the test again. And some of them I failed two or three times before I passed. God is gracious and God is patient. And Abraham our father of those who believe was a man who had great faith in God that brought him recognition in history, and yet the faith was not perfect.

Here we find him deceiving the king concerning his wife because of fear. Twice he was put to this test; twice he failed on this particular test of faith. In the supreme test of faith, man, the guy passed with flying colors. Isn't it interesting how that we can have such great faith in some areas and then just turn right around and get totally wiped out. It makes us realize that even the faith that we have has come to us as a gift from God so that we can't boast in that.

So the king is rebuking Abraham. "What have you done, man? What have I ever done to you that you'd do this kind of a thing to me? How come you said she's your sister?"

Abraham said, Because I thought, Surely the fear of God is not in this place; and they will slay me for my wife's sake (Gen 20:11).

He looked around and said, "Man, these people don't fear God. They're going to kill me for my wife".

And [he said] indeed she is my sister; for she is the daughter of my father, but she's not the daughter of my mother (Gen 20:12);

So she was a half-sister to Abraham.

and she became my wife. And it came to pass, when God caused me to wander from my father's house, that I said unto her, This is the kindness which you will show to me; every place where we go, say that he is my brother. And Abimelech took sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and womenservants, and he gave them to Abraham, and restored Sarah his wife. And Abimelech said, Behold, my land is before you: dwell wherever you're pleased. And to Sarah he said, Behold, I have given your brother a thousand pieces of silver: behold, he is to thee a covering of the eyes, unto all that are with thee, and with all others: thus she was reproved. So Abraham prayed unto God: and God healed Abimelech, and his wife, and the maidservants; and they bare children. For the LORD had caused a barrenness to come to the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah Abraham's wife (Gen 20:12-18).

Sarah could have been with him for a period of time before this all took place. And yet he had never come to her intimately though she was a part of the harem.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/chuck-smith/through-the-bible-genesis-19-20/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net